

The
Alcester Grammar



M.D.C.
NOBISCUM
CHRISTUS STATE.

School Record.

1930-31.

Alcester

Grammar School Record.

No. 38

March 1931

The School Register.

Valete.

Goulbourne, M. (Low. V), 1927-30.

Walker, M. E. (Low. V), 1927-30.

Bradley, F. T. (Upp. IV), 1928-30.

Davis, M. M. (Upp. IV), 1928-30.

Holder, J. (Low. IV), 1928-30.

Davis, C. E. (Rem.) 1928-30.

Davis, J. H. (Rem.), 1928-30.

Gostling, R. H. (Rem.), 1928-30.

Salvete.

Collett, G. O. (I).

Gaydon, R. H. (Rem.)

Green, N. E. (I).

Ison, M. (I).

Johnson, E. (Low. IV).

Old Scholars' Guild News.

PRESIDENT—R. Smith.

SECRETARY—S. Bowen.

TREASURER—R. Smith.

The Winter Reunion was held at the School in the evening of Saturday, December 20th. About seventy members of the Guild assembled, and a thoroughly enjoyable time was spent. According to the usual arrangement, the greater part of the evening was devoted to dancing; but, in addition, two amusing games were introduced. The Reunion closed at midnight with the singing of "Auld Lang Syne."

During the supper interval the business part of the proceedings was dealt with. The balance sheet for the year ending July, 1930, was presented to the meeting and approved. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the honorary auditors, B. Walker and N. Staff.

The question of arrangements for the Summer Reunion was raised and discussed. In the end it was decided that sports should be held at School in the afternoon, as at the last two years' meetings.

An Old Scholars' Dance, arranged for December 6th, was postponed, and was rearranged for January 10th, when it was held in the Town Hall. The Venetian Blues provided the music. The dance was an entire success. There were about seventy present.

A football match against the School XI., played on Saturday, December 13th, resulted in a draw of four goals each. Only nine players turned out for the Old Boys, whose team was as follows:—L. Brewer, E. A. Finnemore, A. Wigley, K. Sherwood, D. S. Bailey, J. Duxbury, P. Finnemore, J. Masters, P. Hodgkinson.

Births.

On October 12th, to Mr. and Mrs. A. Lane (née F. M. Clark, scholar 1913-17)—a son.

On January 27th, to Mr. and Mrs. Williams (née D. M. Lane, scholar 1916-18)—a son.

On February 7th, to Mr. and Mrs. J. Higson (née Florence Andrews, scholar 1913-21)—a son.

Marriages.

On February 17th, at Wixford, Leslie F. Clark (scholar 1917-22) to Barbara N. Adkins (scholar 1912-15).

On February 21st, at Alcester, Hector C. Alleley to Freda Gwen Bishop (scholar 1920-26).

Behind the Closed Door.

Once during the week any interested person may, on looking down the corridor, behold a bevy of enthusiastic maidens, neatly clad and in white overalls and black bandeaux, awaiting their visit to the dining-room, where they are initiated into the profound mysteries of the art of cookery. It is interesting to see that in one respect at least we resemble our Victorian grandmothers, though they might hold up their dainty hands in horror and shame at the gym-hall and other triumphs of our modern generation; yet no doubt they would see some faint glimmer of hope for us if they could but catch a glimpse of the dining-room of A.G.S. on Monday afternoon. What goes on behind that closed door is a mystery to those who have never had the privilege of entering the sanctuary. However some may think otherwise, cookery is an art not to be despised. Even the scoffers would hardly like to eat raw meat, or to go wholly without food; though by now we have learnt the correct—or, I should say, the expected—answer to that hackneyed old question, "Do you live to eat or eat to live?" We must not be led away by the immortal Alice, who would most surely have answered, "They're the same thing, you know." I am

sure, however, that our cooks of Monday afternoon desire no expressions either of sympathy or of scorn from those boys who depart to the bottom hut to engage in a more manly task. We think cookery far superior to wood-work.

The sight of these enthusiasts never fails to remind me of the time when we, too, wended our way, in white overalls (but minus the black ribbons), to the dining-room. We, too, entered the sanctuary; we, too, were proud upon the very rare occasions when we could boast of a perfectly clean overall, complete with belt, our name, and all the buttons—we were never allowed to forget the buttons! When that heavy door was closed behind us we rolled up our sleeves—it looked businesslike, you know—and looked forward to some fascinating work, the result of which, were it successful or not, we flaunted before the longing eyes and watery mouths of our unfortunate companions, and at last carried proudly home. And it was a terrible thing, I assure you, for anyone to sneer at our achievements, and such a proceeding would have invoked our righteous wrath. What mattered it if the custard was a little thin, or the lemonade a trifle sour? We saw all through rose-coloured spectacles, and, at any rate, we would have dared our opponents to do better.

I can remember wondering what was to be our fate when we first assembled. We were bitterly disappointed to find that on the first day, at least, we were not destined to excite the envy of our fellows, but rather their derision. We were to do cleaning. Reluctantly we put on black overalls and set to work. The girls at the stove turned enquiring and slightly annoyed faces upon us when the sight of their grotesque smudges brought forth a ripple of laughter. But theirs was an interesting if dirty task; at least, so we others thought while struggling at untidy cupboards, dirty tables, and a sink of which we had not used, and upon which we had to imagine the grease and scrub accordingly.

But after this first lesson the real cookery began. The first delicacy which I remember making was an Irish stew. Irish stew! That mystery of which we never quite knew the contents until then. Carrots, potatoes, parsnips, onions, all root vegetables (you see I have not forgotten the theory) went into an Irish stew. At length, after much burning of hands, the stew was done. We were persuaded to buy, and were then faced with the appalling problem of taking home our purchase. No one who has not tried to carry Irish stew home on a bicycle can possibly know the agony

of suspense that I underwent then. Had the basin remained upright? Or had I left behind a trail of solitary vegetables and greasy brown liquid? When I got home my Latin book told me the answer; it bears the mark of contact to this day.

We had various other entertainments on this magic Monday afternoon. Sometimes we listened gravely to the expounding of cookery theory; sometimes we spent our time in drawing weird lines, at all angles, and underneath we labelled them as double saucepans and hayboxes, but please don't ask me what *they* are. At another time, as a diversion, we had an energetic lesson on fire drill, though the supposed victim was the least excited of us all. She refused to scream realistically, and we were most disappointed. Perhaps she was eyeing the blanket with reluctance: it certainly was a relic of the past.

However much I enjoyed those cookery lessons, I should certainly have enjoyed them much more had it not been for one thing, which I always thought was very curious indeed. Somehow, though I could follow the theory of the making of certain dishes, the practical part seemed to be always going wrong. Perhaps we had better blame the ingredients. Don't blame the theory, and please don't blame me; it's so disheartening, and, besides, there were always plenty of others ready to do that. It is my maxim to blame the materials. When we made dinner buns there must have been something wrong with the yeast, for though we moulded and moulded, when the buns were cooked they were as diminutive as ever. I did *not* eat those dinner buns. When we attempted sponge, though I was sure I had treated the tin just as the others had done, I simply could not get the mixture out. At another time, the recipes being slightly mixed up, I found that too much tasty cheese makes cheese straws too strong, and a little later I learned that bread left on the toasting-rack too long will burn, however politely you have asked your neighbour to look at it. Then, again, I could never wring a dishcloth in the right manner. I have often wondered why my method was wrong, as I could, by using it, squeeze the cloth almost dry. Perhaps my way was not elegant enough. However, I do not think that I was the only one who found difficulty with the pancakes. I have never seen anything so utterly helpless as a flabby, yellow pancake, after it has been tossed, as it always hangs half in and half out of the pan; it was a lucky thing to turn out one pancake whole.

Whatever these shortcomings, there was one great consolation. No more did we beg and pray for samples of these delicacies; we could now be airily generous. And, doubtless, if we had wished, we could easily have remembered old grudges; we could have refused candy to Mary Jane because, if you remember, she would never give us any cakes or cheese straws. But all that was forgotten. We became the benevolent distributors of generous gifts. The boys, too, however they despised the cooking, were mightily fascinated by the eating of our delicacies, and were quite as eager to impose upon our generosity, or else, if that failed, to tempt us with that well-meant but ill-used expression: "Be a sport!" And so they can take up no critical attitude concerning our painstaking efforts. Despite our warnings and our prophecies of terrible calamity, we generally managed to get rid of half our purchases, and by the time we reached home we were left with about a quarter of our former wealth. Of course, we extend our sympathy to any upon whom our cookery had adverse effects, but they must remember: "Fore-warned is fore-armed!" We, poor things, could only console ourselves by thinking that, after all, in this case, at least, it was more blessed to give than to receive, for the after-effects would not lie upon us alone, but would be shared by the recipients of our magnanimous gifts.

But, alas! all that is at an end. By now our comrades have forgotten their sufferings, and even our generosity. No more do we enjoy our former weekly privileges. Often I smile as I see those white-clad personages; but often, too, the smile is tinged with regret. Though our pastry may at times have been a little tough, and the buns a little small, I am sure that we were all sorry when the year ended, and we were forced back into the ranks of the unprivileged. Indeed, we were even worse off than before, for now it was far beneath our dignity to ask for candy or for cakes. Moreover, it was now signified that we were growing older; that henceforth we should have to take upon ourselves the responsibilities of the Upper School—"To-morrow to fresh fields and pastures new." And so it was not without reluctance that we saw the door of the cookery school of A.G.S. close to us for ever; that door which had seen so many joys and sorrows, so many brilliant successes and deplorable failures. Others were to be admitted where we did not dare to tread. For us it was only "Ave atque vale"—"Greeting and Farewell."

M. A. B.

My Own Life.

As I sat absently gazing into the fast-dying embers of the fire I had a strange vision. Before my wondering eyes appeared a small boy—a chubby little fellow, with twinkling blue eyes and a cheeky, impudent smile. He was playing happily on a large green lawn with his toys. Every now and then he broke into chuckles of glee, and his merry face was wreathed in smiles. There was nothing—then—to interrupt the smooth, care-free path of his innocent young life.

Then the scene changed, and the child had grown into a young man of twenty-one. A lithe, athletic type he was, with a brown, sun-tanned face, and the same blue eyes—no longer twinkling. His face wore an indescribable look of anguish, his brows were drawn together, his teeth set, and his fists clenched. He wore a black suit of mourning, and as he paced up and down his shoulders shook slightly with suppressed emotion. Suddenly he turned, and gazed once more on the stately old mansion which was now his home. At every window the blinds were drawn; the house was stamped with the indelible, unmistakable footprint of death!

Again the scene disappeared; a long, white-washed room was exposed to view. Narrow iron bedsteads were ranged along the walls; white-capped nurses flitted silently to and fro from one bed to another, sympathising with each occupant, and tenderly administering to the needs of each one. How touching it was to see these great stalwart Tommies laid low on a sick bed, the once merry, smiling, happy boys, who have been the makers of England's glory!

One face seemed to stand out above all the rest—a bronzed young face, seamed and furrowed with the ravages of pain. He lay patiently on his narrow bed, his sinews taut, battling in an overwhelming struggle for mastery over pain. There he lay, his one and only fear being lest he should disgrace himself and his regiment by crying out in his anguish.

For the last time everything before me gave place to something new. A large, well-furnished room—elegance, luxury—these were my first impressions of the scene which confronted me. An old man was seated in a deep armchair before a blazing fire. His hair, though silvery white, was still thick and plentiful, despite his aged appearance. Although his back was turned to me, and he was bending forward to gaze into the fire, his figure appeared to be wiry and elastic—a military figure, somewhat spoiled by the bend

of his shoulders. I felt a strange, indefinable longing to see his face, and suddenly my intense yearning was half satisfied; he turned partly, so that I had a side view.

I beheld a profile which was vaguely familiar. His features were clear-cut and well-defined, and although his face gave one the impression that he had experienced great suffering, nothing could conceal its perfect honesty, its straight-forwardness, and its nobility. Then slowly he turned round facing me, and my heart gave a great leap! In infinite amazement I stared, I gasped! I looked closer, and stared again! For the face which I beheld was my own!

H. M. C.

Notes and News.

On Thursday, January 15th, a lecture was given in the hall by Miss Grantham, the subject being "English Humour in Song and Story."

On Friday, January 30th, Captain Durham gave an address on behalf of the R.S.P.C.A.

The Games Subscription this term amounted to £6 3s. 4d.

The half-term holiday was taken on Monday, February 23rd.

An entertainment, organised by Mr. Walker, will be given on the evenings of Thursday and Friday, March 26th and 27th. The proceeds are for the Scout Fund.

The Annual Speech Day Gathering took place in the Picture House on Thursday, March 5th. The certificates were presented by Mr. Arthur Burrell, M.A., formerly Principal of the Borough Road Training College, Isleworth, who gave a most interesting address on "Speech."

On the following day Mr. Burrell gave two recitals at the School. In the morning he entertained the seniors in the hall, while in the afternoon he gave a lantern recital to the juniors in the physics laboratory.

We wish to acknowledge with thanks the gift of "A Gallery of Children," by A. A. Milne, which has been presented to Form i. Library.

Spring Cleaning.

Spring cleaning!—an expression at which the comfort-loving husband shudders with disgust and just a little fear. He is disgusted because it means the foregoing of all comfort at home for at least a week. He is afraid because he knows that unless he is careful he will bring down upon himself the wrath of an exasperated wife. Consequently, spring-cleaning is a word which may not be spoken in a married men's club. Let any man beware who dares to utter these words in that week when the club is especially congested.

Spring cleaning is a bogey which few women can get off their minds. Every year they suddenly take it into their heads to turn everything upside down and move every speck of dust, but invariably let most of it settle in another place. Spring cleaning to the wife is a yearly necessity, as she cleans everything, strips the house of everything, and has all repairs done. To the husband it is a nuisance, a home-disturber, a maker of discomfort, and an expense.

But let us finish with the parents, and turn to the children. Do they like it? Well, that question cannot be answered generally. The younger generation, up to the age of twelve, usually love the period as a novel event. To that tantalising age between twelve and seventeen the novelty has worn off, and it is usually even worse than to a husband. Let me give a friendly word of advice to anyone who is of a rather quiet nature. Never tried to read or write during spring cleaning. You will sit down in one chair which you think is out of the way of the cleaners, when suddenly you will find yourself rudely disturbed, either by a voice thundering, "Get out of my way, do!" or by your chair being swept from under you. If you take yourself off to another room, they will be sure to find you out and start making enough noise to move anyone. If you stand watching the course of events you will be told by an irate mother not to stand doing nothing while she is trying so hard to work. If you are not careful then she will catch you unawares, and set you beating the carpets or moving some furniture. During the topsy-turvy period anyone who does get a good, cooked, sit-down meal may consider himself lucky. Usually, something which requires little or no cooking is set before you. Thus follow your father, and go out somewhere for as long as you can.

There are certain pleasures in spring cleaning if one cares to find them. But be careful that in doing so you do not

annoy the busy parent. There is a certain fascination in seeing all rooms upside down with dust flying everywhere. There are carpets to be beaten—a job which a boy usually enjoys until his arm grows tired. There is furniture to be removed, work which a boy likes because it makes him seem more of a man. There is often some painting or paper-hanging to be done, and what does a boy like to do, or even watch, more than these? But, at the same time, if one asks the housewife if she likes spring cleaning she will most emphatically say she does not. I should not be so incautious as to ask why, therefore, she does it.

As spring cleaning cannot be avoided, it is of no use to grumble. For those who like it the time is one to be looked forward to. But, even then, for a short time after the finish of the work, reproaches for some offence are always falling on the heads of husband and children. All the rooms have been especially cleaned and made spruce-looking. Thus shoes have to be thoroughly cleaned or taken off before one enters the house. If one wears old clothes on Saturdays the new cushions are not to be sat on, while heavy boots are not allowed in the house. It is fortunate that farmers' wives do not possess this mania quite so much as most other women. Perhaps the hard-working farmer would not be able to control his feelings.

C. H. B.

Leisure.

The mind is the most wonderful part of the human body; it works unceasingly and unerringly, like a well-oiled machine, and, like a machine, it must have a rest. What a disastrous state of affairs there would be if one's mind worked in exactly the same way as that of one's neighbour! This is where that wonderful piece of mechanism called a mind differs from the machine made by man. The machine can only work or move in the same way, day after day, month after month; when it has a rest the motion ceases. But rest for the mind usually means a change of thought or occupation.

How do we rest our minds? This is an easy question to ask, but the answer requires a little thought, because different people have different ideas of leisure. What, exactly, do we mean by leisure? People's opinions vary over the meaning of this word, but in my opinion leisure is the time free from occupation or employment—a time to devote to pursuits and pleasures which we love; in other words, to rest our minds by changing our occupation.

We will not compare the different ways of enjoying leisure because comparisons are odious, but we might take a few examples.

A business man comes home to his dinner tired and irritable after his day's work in the city. He settles himself comfortably before a cheerful fire, and becomes absorbed in his newspaper; a member of the family venturing a remark is rewarded by a testy grunt from behind the paper. This is one example of how leisure is spent.

One evening when I was coming home in an omnibus I overheard scraps of conversation between two business girls.

"What shall we do after tea to-night?" asked the first young lady.

"The best way that I can think of to kill the time is to go to the pictures," replied the other.

Kill time! Go to the pictures! I was horror-stricken; but I cannot criticise. Those two girls would probably elevate their finely-pencilled eyebrows at my idea of spending my leisure moments, and, alas! they are all too few.

"And how do you spend your time?" I hear you ask.

That depends entirely upon the mood which I am in. If I am in a gay, happy frame of mind, I like to go for a ride on my bicycle. O, the joy of feeling the wind blowing on my cheeks, turning them to a glowing red! It is in these moments that I appreciate Beeching's poem: "Going Down Hill on a Bicycle."

Sometimes my leisure moments find me in a thoughtful frame of mind. Then, like the poet, Herbert, I say to myself:

"Laugh not too much; the witty man laughs least;
For wit is news to ignorance."

If I feel like this, I am plainly not fit to associate with civilised companions, and I go for a walk. I remember vividly one evening of golden silence when I felt like this; how I walked through a larch copse; in its stillness it reminded me of an enchanted wood in a fairy tale. Occasionally something moved in the undergrowth with a swift rustle, or a blackbird raised a long trill of warning. A gentle breeze swayed the topmost branches of the slender trees, providing sweet music to soothe a troubled, rebellious spirit. In the west a long black line of cloud lay like a barrier across the sun, so that great rays slanted over the countryside, transforming all things with their radiance. I returned home rested and at peace with all men. It is in

moments such as these that I appreciate the lines written by Rudyard Kipling:

"If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim."

Sometimes, sad to relate, my leisure moments find me in a mood when I could bite, scratch, or kick anyone who dares to cross my path. Then I use the simplest cure I know—I play the piano. I allow my fingers to wander over the keys in unison with my thoughts. Nearly all my life music has been my great joy and solace, and although I am by no means a brilliant musician, the remedy for my ill-humour invariably works. Shelley once said:

"Music loosens the serpent which care has bound
Upon my heart to stifle it."

Thus do I spend my leisure. A look of disgust passes over your face, scorn is written plainly in your eyes, while your lips say: "Well, fancy wasting your time doing those futile things! I would——" But don't compare. Only remember that our minds—unlike the machine—are not made exactly alike, and that our ideas of leisure are entirely different.

V. W.

The Cup-Tie.

The morning of the cup-tie between Slumberland and Shallsee dawned brightly for one so early in March. This day was to witness the end of the struggle among the contending factions of our sporting community for the possession of the much-coveted cup of the local football association. The respective teams had each disposed of a dozen opponents, while filling the hospitals with wounded. This cup, as everyone should know, is a real cup of bitterness, and a cause of seething unrest among the male population. To carry off this trophy is the greatest honour possibly attainable in the realm of football. The mention even of this cup breeds ill-will and violent disturbances more quickly than politics. The air felt strangely oppressive, despite the bright sunshine outside, as I sat in the corner of a railway carriage speeding towards the metropolis of the Midlands. This feeling was not produced by the tobacco fumes which filled the compartment with a reeking haze, nor yet by the neighbouring fat gentleman who pinned me in position by dint of an elbow and his own hearty respiration. The air was full of expectancy, doubt, fear and hope, and by this time of the thousand allied odours of a large station in the midst of a larger industrial city. No wonder that it felt oppressive!

The final duel had been arranged for 2.30 p.m., at Willow Park; the weapons were of the well-known nature, which, incidentally, cover a multitude of skins, and lay bare the bones of many shins. The rivals were at full strength after the respite which they had been granted, during which they had replaced losses and practised their men for this final Herculean encounter. The expectancy of a thrilling game, and the premature knowledge of cup-tie crowds, incited me to arrive at the arena in good time for the commencement of play. When I had found a seat conveniently near an exit gangway I began to survey the scene before me. The pitch looked exceedingly green, except where it was decorated with arcs, circles, and straight lines executed in sawdust. A high fence, armed with barbed wire and steel spikes, surrounded the so-called park to prevent illicit entrances. The seats in the grand stand were rapidly filling up, and far below the crowd was already straining against the rope barrier as only cup-tie crowds can do. At intervals along the touchline were groups of first-aid and ambulance men, while the crowd was kept in order by numerous policemen. Batteries of cameras had been erected all around the vast ground, behind which lurked hosts of Press men. The confused murmuring was hushed as the spectators saw the fateful hour approaching. At last the spell was broken by cheers which rent the air as the rival teams filed from their quarters on to the field of battle. Slumberland won the toss, and elected to play with the slight breeze and bright sun at their backs, thus putting Shallsee at an obvious disadvantage. Again the cheering broke out, louder, longer, and more insistent as the teams lined up in their positions, while the cameras opened fire on all sides. The linesmen were at their posts, and the referee, watch in hand, was waiting for the few remaining seconds to pass. The assembled thousands seemed hardly to breathe, and those few seconds, passed in such suspense, seemed like centuries. The fate of two nations could not possibly have produced such a tense silence. The eyes of all were strained upon the scene, where the sun threw into bright relief the forms of the rival teams. Every player was a picked man, known by this time throughout the length and breadth of England. Those motionless figures represented the expenditure of thousands of pounds and countless hours of unwearying training, all for the possession of the cup for one short year.

The shrill blast of the starting whistle cut across the silence, which immediately gave way to cheers and yells of

encouragement as Shallsee swept forward to the attack; the great game had commenced. The ball passed with incredible speed from player to player, passes were intercepted and clearances made from both ends, so that for fully a quarter of an hour neither team made any appreciable headway, and this served only to increase the interest of the crowd, which seemed to sway and fro with the ball. From a throw-in Slumberland raced away, and again the murmuring rose from an inaudible babble to an exultant yell from one half of the spectators, and sank to groans of despair among the other half. Shoot! shoot, you ——! bellowed a stentorian voice from my side to the centre-forward who had the ball at the moment, and, suiting his actions to his words, he bestowed a vicious kick on my inoffensive shin. The goalkeeper, however, dived at full length, and pushed out the ball for a fruitless corner, much to the annoyance of my neighbour, who, slumping down again into his seat, from which he had risen, assumed a dejected look. I had gone to view the match as a neutral, but this unasked for and unpleasant gift turned me at once into a warm Shallsee supporter, simply to be at variance with the donor.

Mid-field play ensued, followed by a raid on the Slumberland goal. Everyone stood up to get a better view of the raid, which had now turned into a tussle in front of goal; we shouted and yelled ourselves hoarse, and still the writhing mass made no progress. Somehow the ball slipped from among the tangled mass of legs, only to be driven with a resounding thud against the crossbar. A tussle now began in the very mouth of the goal, but the goalkeeper ended it by punching away the ball in magnificent style. Amid the deafening uproar which acclaimed this feat my hat was punched off my head from behind by a wildly gesticulating individual, who must have taken it for a football. At this very same instant, however, the offender was felled by a blow on the ear from his neighbour, and was carried from his seat in a fainting condition. The crowd were pushing and jostling each other in their excitement, while the announcer at the microphone strove to make his voice audible above the din, giving the progress of the game to thousands of persons in their own homes. A long blast of the referee's whistle brought the first half of the match to a close, neither team, as yet, having asserted its superiority, though both had shown great skill, and the crowd had, I am certain, encouraged and given hints enough. The interval was quickly spent in heated arguments about the result of the game and in discussions on various prominent

players. Several persons were in the hands of the first-aid men recovering from fainting fits caused by the surging crowd, which now presented the appearance of a sea of heads. Space among them was so restricted that the patients had to be lifted up bodily and passed over the heads of the throng.

The teams again lined up for the resumption of play, and, apart from a few limps and bandages on either side, were as fresh and determined as before. Again the whistle's blast was drowned in cheers as Slumberland pushed forward a fierce attack, which culminated in a splendid low drive from their centre entering the net, despite a fine effort to save it on the part of the goalkeeper. This was the first goal of the match, and the spectators virtually went mad; they danced about in their excitement, knocked each other down, threw up their hats and caps, clapped their hands, shouted encouragement to their friends and defiance to their rivals, and emitted such a variety of shouts, yells, screams, whoops that all became inseparable in a noise which shook the earth, air, and very clouds above. Neither cheer nor groan could it be called, but a mixture of sounds as indescribable as those of the famous tower in the Bible. The crowd, in its excitement, carried away the barriers and flooded the pitch, necessitating a delay until order could again be restored, and irritating everyone beyond measure. The game then proceeded at a fast rate, both sides attacking without result time after time, until a penalty was awarded Shallsee and produced an equalising goal. The roar which went up from the assembled thousands was even louder and longer than its predecessor, if that was possible. Oaths and epithets, gibes, jeers, and threats were hurled at the offender, the referee, and, indeed, anyone who appeared to think otherwise than those who hurled them. Free fights among parties of rival supporters became the order of the day, being carried on without mercy or quarter being asked for or given. To be a referee in such circumstances is no pleasant office, but it showed me plainly why it would have been hopelessly impossible for the game to have taken place at all on any other than a neutral ground under an unprejudiced referee. Such is the spirit and fervour of our cup-tie crowds that no one can think of remaining neutral except the referee, who is accused by all for his pains. The clouds now lowered and became visibly darker, while the breeze rose to a fairly high wind. As Slumberland broke away from the centre the sun was blotted out, and the first few drops of rain fell stingingly about their ears. The wind

increased almost to a gale, which swept the pitch with blinding sheets of rain. This was the beginning of the end. Slumberland had to face this gale, while Shallsee had it at their backs. The crowd turned up their coat collars and hoisted umbrellas, for nothing could damp their enthusiasm, although the wind howled mournfully around the grand stand and the rain drove against their faces and wetted them to the skin. The pitch became, in a very short time, a sea of mud, which was being constantly churned up by the players. Slumberland's white quickly changed to a dirty brown through visits to mother earth, while the red and blue of the Shallsee players assumed an exactly similar hue. Falls were more frequent now, and the cheering came in fits, partly because of the inability to watch the game closely and partly because of the frequent gusts of wind which quickly carried away the sounds. The rain ceased, and with its cessation came renewed hope and expectation, for only about twenty minutes remained. With the strong wind at their backs Shallsee attacked the Slumberland goal unceasingly, but were unable to score owing to the stubborn and skilful defence. The players had by this time become almost unrecognisable, looking like so many lumps of moving mud. We all found ourselves on our feet, craning our necks and using our shoulders to get a better view, at the same time giving vent to the fiercest yells ever uttered. Once the ball grazed the upright and then paid a short visit to the Shallsee end, only returning to be bashed into an empty goal after one glorious save on the part of the custodian. The cheers which greeted this winning goal are ringing in my ears as I write these lines. I can still see the prostrate goalkeeper half buried in the mire with the ball residing in the net behind him. Then the air is filled with an ear-rending crash—a combination of clapping, stamping, yelling, shouting and whistling—Shallsee are winning, and, with a short elbow jab in the ribs, I lay my neighbour full length upon the floor, although, believe me, I had no intention of doing so. He rises with a pained expression, but neither of us speak—is it not the cup-tie? In vain do Slumberland try to fight back, and the close of time sees Shallsee two goals ahead, through a beautiful corner. The great game is over—Shallsee have won the cup. The latter is presented to the Shallsee captain before our eyes, and once more the batteries open fire, after which the immense crowd disperses as if by magic, while the teams retire to be congratulated and treated to suppers or to rub their sores and lament their loss. The cheers which greeted

the presentation of the cup seemed far away, for my ears had long since ceased functioning. That, however, did not matter. I had seen the cup-tie fought to a finish, and was perfectly satisfied.

Stiff, aching, tired and sore, but glad at heart, I retired to bed; but not to rest. For a long time I lay awake thinking of the day's events until I gradually drifted into a state of unstable sleep. The ringing in my ears brought me back to Willow Park, and I am afraid that I shouted several times before I again heard a voice of thunder yell—shoot, shoot you — ! and awoke with a start, having kicked my own sadly bruised shin. I lay in this hopeless state until I had kicked and talked myself to sleep, having resolved to get up early in the morning. My resolution was too much for me, however, the spirit being willing but the flesh, alas, being weak, and the ten o'clock sun looked upon a battered wreck sleeping amid a chaos of bed clothes. Presently I awoke, feeling sick and dizzy. Where had I been? What had I been doing? My bruises reminded me of the great cup-tie which I had witnessed, and everything came back with alarming suddenness and clarity. I tried to shout "Shallsee have won," but nothing happened. My throat, I remembered, had been hoarse, and no wonder; but, putting my hands to my neck, which seemed strangely stiff, the full horror of my situation dawned upon me. No longer was it one neck, but four; and the head fixed upon it refused to turn without the rest of the body. Weakly I murmured "m-um-ps," and tried to sleep again. Worst of all, I had to endure being congratulated on my excellent imitation of the cup-tie which I had given free of charge during the night, while my bulging neck seemed to cause more amusement than could reasonably have been expected. At all events, I consoled myself—"I saw the real cup-tie, they only got an imitation of it; and I have a whole year in which to get over the mumps."

F. H.

Olla Podrida.

C. C. informs us that "Mrs. Gamp is a morbid person with a preposition for gin." Shades of Mrs. Malaprop!

Corpus humo sublime referem—I related my body to the high ground.

Who refers to football as a heathy and a dirty game?

"He pays you the most gentile compliments," remarks J. L.

Is it not rather unusual for the seconder of a vote of thanks to express a hope that next time the lecturer's "presence will not be so prolonged"?

Muzical Society.

SECRETARY—Gwynne Jones.

At the final meeting of last term the promised sing-song, in which every member was able to take part, was provided. During the afternoon an indication of the youthful talent of the school was given by those Scouts who, under the direction of Mr. Lester and Mr. E. Bunting, are becoming competent flautists, when the audience were accompanied by them in three Christmas carols.

This term the Society has been obliged to hold only one meeting instead of the usual three, both owing to the pressure of a Scout Concert and to the shortness of the term. The meeting was held on Tuesday, February 17th, and a voluntary programme was provided by the members of the Society, assisted by Mr. E. Bunting. Some contributions took the form of songs, others of gramophone records; while one violinist, one pianoforte soloist and the flautists provided good material on the instrumental side. The committee can only hope that these instrumentalists will continue in their good work, and that other members of the Society who play musical instruments will come forward. Mr. E. Bunting sang four songs—"The Green Hills of Somerset," "Chorus, Gentlemen," and then "The Policeman's Song" (from "The Pirates of Penzance") and "A January Morning in Somerset." His recital was so much enjoyed that he had to oblige the members with an encore, for which he chose "The Pirate King," again from "The Pirates of Penzance." An innovation was made in this meeting in that each member had to announce the title of his or her item. The attendance was not so good as it was hoped, since there were only thirty members present out of a possible forty-seven; but the absences can, no doubt, be attributed to the usual epidemic of colds which assails us at this time of the year.

D. G. J.

Postage Stamp Club.

SECRETARY—Gwynne Jones.

The fortnightly meetings for the exchange of duplicates have been held regularly this term, but the industrial depression seems to have penetrated even to the philatelic world, since only very small additions have been made to members' collections.

We are looking forward to a full meeting at the end of the term, when a talk will be given on some topic of philatelic interest.

The meetings of the club will be suspended during the summer term. It is hoped that during the next school year the club will be much better supported by our youthful philatelists than has been the case this year, and that something of the club's earlier activities may be renewed.

D. G. J.

Scouts.

None of the usual Scout work has been carried out this term, as rehearsals for the coming concert have taken up every available moment. Mr. Druller has kindly written two plays, and we are hoping to make a great success of this concert.

A gift of £2 12s. 6d. was paid into the bank soon after Christmas, as a result of the efforts of several generous carol singers, who wish to remain anonymous. The Scouts thank those persons very much for their welcome gift.

P. L. EAGLES.

Football.

CAPTAIN—Harper. SECRETARY—Baylis i.

The football team has improved on its last season's record, having won three and drawn one out of eleven matches. The value of combination has at last been realised, and marked improvement has been shown recently, ball control making up for lack of avoirdupois. We are confidently expecting that this improvement will be shown in the results of the remaining matches of the season.

Two sides matches have been decided, the results being: Jackals 1, Tomtits 0; Tomtits 7, Brownies 3.

First XI. results to date:—

- v. Stratford N.F.U. (away), lost 1—2.
- v. Evesham P.H.G.S. (away), lost 0—15.
- v. Redditch S.S. (away) lost 1—8.
- v. Bromsgrove S.S. (home), lost 2—8.
- v. Stratford Grove House (home), won 3—1.

- v. Old Scholars' XI. (home), drawn 4—4.
- v. Campden G.S. (away), lost 1—5.
- v. Stratford N.F.U. (home), lost 1—6.
- v. Stratford Grove House (away), won 10—0.
- v. Bromsgrove S.S. (away), lost 2—14.
- v. Redditch S.S. (home), won 2—1.

Hockey.

CAPTAIN—M. Lane. SECRETARY—L. Earp.

Up to the present only two matches have been played by the first eleven. The match with Evesham Ladies was closely fought, and at half-time seemed likely to result in a victory for the School, but in the second half the School were unable to keep the lead, although they had the advantage of a strong wind behind them. The match with Evesham P.H.G.S., however, resulted in a win for A.S.S. after a muddy but none the less enjoyable game. Owing to the bad weather, the match with Redditch S.S. unfortunately had to be cancelled.

The Second XI. and Junior fixtures, on February 28th, with Evesham P.H.S.S. teams were scratched on account of the weather.

Only one Sides match has been played so far this term. In this the Brownies were successful, beating the Jackals 7—0.

The results so far have been as follows:—

- A.G.S. v. Evesham Ladies (away), lost 1—3.
- v. Redditch S.S. (home), cancelled.
- v. Evesham P.H.S.S. (away), won 4—2.

L. E.

For the Juniors.

The Magic Diamond.

There once lived a gnome called Silver-ear. One day, as he was out walking, he found in the earth a little hole. As he was very inquisitive he got a stick, and, pushing it in, found the earth very soft. So he pushed harder, and at last it broke away; and in the hole he found the most beautiful diamond that he had ever seen. He picked it up very carefully, and put it into the little rush basket that he was carrying. Then he toddled off home, very pleased with what he had found.

At home he placed his precious diamond on a shelf. But when he was just going to put it away he noticed on the bottom of it a bit of reading, with lots of lines through it, and every minute it lit up and the reading seemed to say, "I am magic."

The gnome was very much surprised at this, but he put the diamond away without saying anything and went to bed. That night he dreamed that the diamond changed into a lovely Princess, and he kissed her, and she fell to the floor and left in her place rich jewels.

He got up in the morning greatly wondering about his dream. He looked on his shelf, found his diamond, and took it in his hand. It fell to rich jewels, and he was changed to a handsome Prince. Then he started to gather up the jewels in his hand. He kissed them, and there stood the lovely Princess of his dream. He again gazed at her, and she smiled; and as she did so the small home of Silver-ear was changed to a lovely palace. Silver-ear said, "Will you stay with me always?" "Yes," said the Princess, sweetly.

The next day they were married, and they lived very happily together.

And very often afterwards the Prince would say, "Wasn't that a magic diamond, my sweet Princess?"

E. . SIMMONS,

(AGED 8 YEARS, FORM I.)

The Haunted House.

There was once a haunted house, and in it lived ten goblins.

The house was falling down, and seven little birds were nesting there.

The goblins did not know that there were two ogres in one of the rooms until one day the ogres came down with their clubs in their hands, ready to strike a blow on their heads.

One of the goblins flew to the cupboard, another got up the fallen chimney, and rest ran outside.

Then the ogres opened the cupboard and ate that goblin. Then they got up the chimney, but the goblin climbed to the top, jumped down, and broke his neck. But the ogres got stuck in the chimney, and in a minute the house had fallen down, so all the ogres were killed.

The other goblins had nowhere to go, so they went to the forest. There a tiger ate them up.

And this is the end of my story.

GREEN,

(AGED 7 YEARS, FORM I.)

ALCESTER:
THE CHRONICLE OFFICE,
HIGH STREET.
